

CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Special Public Hearing Meeting
Monday, April 12, 2004 - - 4:30 p.m.

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Present: Mayor William D. Euille, Vice Mayor Redella S. Pepper, Members of Council Ludwig P. Gaines, K. Rob Krupicka, Andrew H. Macdonald, Paul C. Smedberg and Joyce Woodson.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Sunderland, City Manager; Ms. Evans, Assistant City Manager; Mr. Pessoa, City Attorney; Mr. Jinks, Assistant City Manager; Mr. Caton, Legislative Director; Ms. Fogarty, Director of Planning and Zoning; Police Lieutenant Uzzell; Mr. Johnson, Budget Director; Mr. Kincannon, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Activities; Ms. Boyd, Citizen Assistance; Mr. Baier, Transportation and Environmental Services Director; Ms. Gordon, Public Information Officer; Mr. Neckel, Finance Director; Ms. Neibauer, Director of Human Rights; Mr. Dahlberg, Code Enforcement Director; Ms. Moore, Acting Deputy Director of Management and Budget; Ms. Taylor, Budget Analyst; Ms. Murphy, Budget Analyst; Ms. Padron, Budget Analyst; Ms. Douglas, Budget Analyst; Mr. Doku, Budget Analyst; Mr. Coleman, Budget Analyst; and Ms. Smith-Page, Real Estate Director.

Recorded By: Jackie M. Henderson, City Clerk and Clerk of Council.

OPENING

1. Calling the Roll.

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor Euille, and the City Clerk called the Roll; all Members of City Council were present.

2. Public Hearing on the Proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY 2005 (including Schools) and the Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2005-2010 (including the School CIP.)

While comments on tax rates can be made as part of the public hearing on the Budget and the CIP, the Public Hearing on An Ordinance to Establish Real Estate and Personal Property Tax Rates for Calendar Year 2005 and the effective tax rate increase for 2005, and the Public Hearing on an Ordinance to Increase the Sewer Maintenance Fees will be held on April 17, 2004.

Mayor Euille invited the public to speak.

Gary Senton, Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, 5400 Ox Road, Fairfax Station, said that with him is Bill Dickinson, the City Council appointee to the Board. He spoke about the focus of the NVRPA and the parks. He said he hoped that as Council struggles with the City budget and the unknowns of the State budget, he hoped they would maintain their support in areas that have a big impact and significant return for the people of Alexandria.

Sheri Sobkowiak, 100 N. Washington Street, Suite 234, Falls Church, representing the membership of Arc of Northern Virginia, spoke on behalf of people with disabilities and their families who are in desperate need of respite services. She said it is important to not forget about the individuals and their families, and she urged Council to support funding for respite services.

Laurie Kusek, 100 N. Washington Street, Suite 234, Falls Church, said she had an older sister who had Downs Syndrome, and she was lucky in that she was able to get a job with Service Source. She said parents are terrified of what will happen when they do not outlive their children. She asked Council to not forget the very important population.

Mimi Carter, 106 East Cliff Street, along with Diana Beckman, 204A E. Bellefonte Avenue, chair of the Del Ray Citizens Association Education Committee, spoke in support of full funding of the schools and said they are willing to forego tax relief to better support the public schools. Ms. Beckman spoke of the plan to cut \$1 million from the Schools budget and said they are sacrificing long-term goals for short-term relief. She spoke of her wait in line all night to get her child into kindergarten. Ms. Carter also noted a letter from the Del Ray Citizens Association, which she submitted for the record and is marked as Exhibit No. 1 of Item No. 2, 4/12/04.

Ronnie Campbell, 5731 Leverette Court, PTA Council President, spoke in support of the School budget and said she was curious why the \$960,000 needed to be cut. She said she heard the reduction of money is expected to be entirely made up by the State revenue, which exceeds the budgeted amount, however, it is not a guarantee. (A copy of Ms. Campbell's statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 2, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Deborah Tillman, 5001 Seminary Road, Suite 108, Early Childhood Education Directors Association, said they ask Council to increase the maximum reimbursable rate paid to child care centers so that it reflects the actual market rates for child care centers, and they would like Council to increase the eligibility scale to 300 percent Federal poverty limit. (A copy of Ms. Tillman's statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 3, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Lisa Miller, 61 E. Taylor Run Parkway, business owner, parent and member of the PTSA, asked Council to fully fund the computers in the schools, as it will save money. She spoke of the need for money to be allocated toward parent and community involvement.

Michael Carrasco, 119 Normandy Hill Drive, chair of the special education advisory committee to the Schools, asked for support and approval for full-funding for the Superintendent's operating budget for the schools.

Julie Scanlon, 5432 Dawes Avenue, president-elect of the T.C. Williams PTSA, asked Council to fully endorse the school budget as submitted.

Anna Skubel, 603 Upland Place, 5th Grader, Douglas MacArthur Elementary School, said the school budget should stay as proposed, as the children would be affected if it got smaller. (A copy of Ms. Skubel's statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 4, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Jeannie Cummins, 4 E. Oxford Avenue, member of Arc of Northern Virginia, thanked Council for filling funding gaps for job supports for the special education graduates in the past, and she said they are looking at making headway in Richmond this year, as they have both put plans in motion to add a significant number of Medicaid, mental retardation, home and community based waiver services slots to the state budget this year. She spoke of the funds given to Alexandria residents on the urgent needs waiting list for the Medicaid waiver services. (A copy of Ms. Cummin's statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 5, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Patrick McClintock-Comeaux, 431 Ferdinand Day, principal, Samuel Tucker Elementary School, spoke in support of Council fully funding the schools budget, as it is a sound investment. He said the budget includes several new initiatives - math specialist for the elementary school, technology initiative for T.C. Williams, and a modified school calendar to promote continuous learning.

Linda Gallagher, 8029 Wellington Road, 3rd grade teacher at Samuel Tucker Elementary School, requested that Council fully fund the school budget.

Barbara Lehr, 5037 Domain Place, co-president, Minnie Howard PTSA, asked Council to fully fund the school budget as submitted.

Gordon Johnston, 419 E. Windsor Avenue, representing the PTA from Mt. Vernon Community School, encouraged Council to approve the City Manager's full-funding of the recommended school CIP, which includes the T.C. Williams project. He asked Council to fund the initiatives and work with the School Board to figure out a way to fund the School Board recommendations. (A copy of Mr. Johnston's statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 6, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Pam Cornelio, 4004 Feather Stone Place, PTA president, Hammond Middle School, urged Council to approve the school budget in its entirety.

Patricia Chamberlain, 5102 Richenbacher Avenue, president of the Polk PTA, appeared with her daughter Caroline and asked Council to fully support the budget submitted by the School Board.

Marianne Hetzer, 604 Mansfield Street, president-elect of the Polk Elementary School PTSA, said that for the past seven years, the Council has fully-funded the schools budget request. She asked Council to fully-fund the schools budget.

Trisha Chogich, 5120 Maris Avenue, speaking on behalf of Tucker Elementary's PTA, appeared with her daughter Elizabeth, and she asked Council to fully-fund the school budget.

Eric Fries, 1003 Janneys Lane, 5th Grader at Douglas MacArthur Elementary School, asked Council to not cut the school budget, as they need every penny it can get. (A copy of Mr. Fries' statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 7, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Andrew Romaine, 5th Grader at MacArthur Elementary School, asked Council to approve the school budget, as there is nothing more important than education. (A copy of Mr. Romaine's statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 8, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Joan Renner, representing the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, said the businesses provide half of the City's tax and non-tax revenue, and she spoke of reducing the tax burden on the City's families, and the revenue from business makes a substantial contribution to affordability. She spoke of the savings to the homeowner because of new development.

Lonnie Rich, 801 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 402, vice chair of government relations for the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, spoke about maintaining an appropriate balance between development and open space and said the Chamber supports the acquisition of open space through the dedicated one cent tax and recommended the development of guidelines for the open space acquisition. Mr. Rich said the Chamber recommends that specific monitoring tools be developed for the effectiveness of the additional tax relief for low income homeowners, and encourages any additional measures that may be possible to increase affordability for middle income homeowners. He said the Chamber supports the creation of a new community housing corporation. Mr. Rich thanked the City for the additional funds for the small business development center. He said the budget contains Capital Improvements for schools, recreation, transportation, pedestrian improvements and public safety, and the Chamber supports the CIP budget.

Charlie Collum, chairman and CEO of Burke and Herbert Trust Company, said they are pleased to be part of the economic vitality of the City. He said he is the chairman-elect of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and strongly support continuing the policy of balancing the use of cash capital and debt financing to finance needed improvements, as it is imperative for the City to maintain its Triple A bond rating. He said the measures to improve traffic, transit and transportation in the City are an important part to a livable city and the Chamber supports them. He said the Chamber encourages the City to promote the use of the DASH system, the set-aside of funds to promote holiday shopping, and the City Manager's recommendation regarding the school budget. The Chamber encourages the fiscal responsibility of cost reductions in the operating budget, they support the operating budget, they encourage an overall review of staffing levels and compensation within the City, and they encourage awareness of the need for an adequate rainy-day fund.

Ken Moore, 801 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 402, representing the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, thanked Council for creating the business facilitator position. He noted that they support continued improvements in Planning and Zoning and encourage funding to allow them to handle advanced planning for future development. The Chamber encourages the City to continually improve its services to citizens and business without rising cost, for example, the website should be enhanced to better communicate services, policies, forms and general information. It encourages the City to adopt more formal performance management measures. Mr. Moore encouraged the City to review the overall structure of its business license tax rates and to ensure fairness and comparability with other localities.

Julie Crenshaw, 816 Queen Street, asked Council to include \$300,000 for the center that the Tenant and Workers Support Committee has been asking for. She said the people speaking on the school budget are not the people who need to be most served by the school budget, as the majority of people don't speak English very well and have other concerns and there is no one to speak for them.

Stephanie Martinez, 42 E. Reed Avenue, a student at Minnie Howard and a member of the Alexandria United Teens, spoke in support of the idea of hiring two more counselors and giving multi-cultural training for all counselors at T.C. Williams.

Juana Campos, 3911 Bruce Street, #12B, a student at T.C. Williams and a member of the Alexandria United Teens, spoke about the school needing two more counselors and encouraged Council to fund the counselors and the multi-cultural training.

Ivonne Byrd, 241 Lee Haven Drive, said she has a student at Cora Kelly School, and the parents support the idea of having a bilingual parent liaison position for Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology. She submitted a petition for the record to urge Council to support and fund the formation of a parent community liaison position. A copy of Ms. Byrd's statement and petition is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 9, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Susan Johnson, 2918 N. Rosser Street, chair of the Early Childhood Commission, spoke about the preschool population and thanked the City Manager for including a modest \$50,000 to the children's fund, but it will not allow them to expand their programs and services to the extent they would like. She requested more money for the children's fund and to support the city's child care assistance programs. She asked Council to consider the children's fund and the needs of children in the City as it sets the policy and priorities through the budget document.

Lisa Chimento, 524 Fort Williams Parkway, on behalf of the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee, spoke in support of the CIP budget as proposed, but had concerns about the borrowing capacity of the City in FY 2008, and about the increased funding from non-City sources. Significant unforeseen new CIP's or cost over-runs could crowd out other needed capital improvements in the future, and they urge Council not to reduce cash capital contributions to the CIP. Ms. Chimento said borrowing against open space revenues would not be appropriate at this time, due to the lack of Council approved guidelines for acquisition of open space and the fact that there is little if any room under the debt policy guidelines for additional borrowing. She said they urge Council to look carefully at personnel costs when considering potential spending reductions, they encourage the expanded use of performance measures and intensive audits of agencies and programs to identify cost savings, they encourage Council to work toward a long-term strategic plan, and they also endorse the affordable homeownership protection grant program. (A copy of Ms. Chimento's statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 10, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Mary Riley, 202 East Alexandria Avenue, speaking on behalf of the Community Services Board, registered their support for the budget, spoke in favor of the CSB programs, noted concern of the State budget situation, the closing of Inova Alexandria Hospital psychiatric unit and the budgetary impacts on them and other departments, and expressed appreciation to the Manager and Council for their commitment and support to Alexandria's most vulnerable citizens. (A copy of Ms. Riley's statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 11, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Scott Burr, 312 Montgomery Street, representing the Alexandria Education Partnership, expressed concern that the City Manager's budget for the schools remains underfunded and the absence of the money will cause the removal of critical programs.

Robert L. Smith, 1102 Bayliss Drive, acting chair of the City's USS Alexandria Liaison Committee, explained the committee's function and requested \$10,000 for the Committee for use when the USS Alexandria submarine comes to the City.

Judy Noritake, 605 Prince Street, speaking on behalf of the Park and Recreation Commission, noted their full support of the City Manager's budget for the department's operations in the coming year. She spoke of the capital improvements for Patrick

Henry and Charles Houston and expected there to be an increase in cost next year, and she noted that Chinguapin is in for 2007 for \$20 million and the Commission completed meetings in the community asking if it is the right location and program for its expansion. She said the open space task force will meet with Council in mid-May and will speak to its progress, and she said the Commission will support the one cent. She said that on a personal note, she thought Council should consider monitorizing some of that money.

Larry Grossman, 1123 Powhatan Street, speaking on behalf of the residents along the east side of Powhatan between Second Street and Bashford Lane, showed photographs to Council, and said he had previously sent a petition to T&ES requesting that a study be done of the service road. He asked that consideration be given to including this in the street improvement account.

Bill North-Rudin, 2210 Mt. Vernon Avenue, speaking on behalf of the Alexandria Volunteer Bureau, spoke to full funding for the community partnership fund for \$862,775, and the youth fund for \$292,226.

Kathryn Brown, 2724 Hickory Street, representing the Alexandria Arts Forum, said they continue to be grateful for the support of Council by increasing funding for the arts. She said the Alexandria Commission for the Arts and the Arts Forum have developed a good working relationship as it pursues common goals. Also speaking with Ms. Brown were members of the forum Alan Wile, of the Alexandria Harmonizers, Trudy VanDyke, Director of the Torpedo Factory Arts Center, and Ulysses James, Music Director of the Mt. Vernon Orchestra Association.

Ellen Balif, 2703 George Mason Place, representing the George Washington Middle School PTA, asked Council to continue to provide the school system the financial support it needs.

General Richard Groves, 614 Oronoco Street, speaking on behalf of the Lee Fendal House Museum, spoke about the \$100,000 needed to make repairs to the main structural beam of the building. (A copy of General Groves' statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 12, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

Bill Hendrickson, 304 E. Spring Street, asked Council to continue its commitment to open space acquisition and increase it if possible. He also asked Council to make greater policy and financial commitments to both on-street and off-street trails for walking and bicycling, and he urged Council to hire a full-time person to plan and coordinate bicycle, pedestrian and trail projects. He also asked Council to provide funding for attractive pedestrian-oriented lighting in the Mt. Vernon Avenue business district. (A copy of Mr. Henderickson's statement is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council and is marked as Exhibit No. 13, Item No. 2, 4/12/04.)

John Sprinkle, 603 Johnston Place, representing the Maury Elementary PTA, asked for Council's support of the school's budget.

Annabelle Fisher, Edsall Road, said it needs to look at having a full-time Mayor and City Council, with the money for that coming from the elimination of the City Manager and office so that Council could do it in the future. She suggested that the school administration not lease as much expensive office space. She said she agrees with the City Manager on the schools budget and to look at their budget to see what they are spending and make sure they are good stewards of the money. Ms. Fisher suggested that the money in the Planning Department budget be used to hire two full-time experienced planners. She said ARHA needs to be put back into Council's authority. She also asked Council to think about the proposal for the tax on movies and theaters, as the City double taxes on a lot of items.

Jayne Tynan, 107 West Bellefonte Avenue, speaking on behalf of Polk School's PTA, spoke in support of fully funding the schools budget.

Councilman Macdonald said he is concerned that they provide forms of tax relief to help people that are less fortunate, but there are older people that have trouble paying their tax bills, and they need to look at initiatives for helping upper middle-income people who are having trouble paying their bill and have been in the City for a long time.

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THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED, upon motion by Councilwoman Woodson, seconded by Vice Mayor Pepper and carried unanimously, at 6:52 p.m., the Special Public Hearing Meeting of April 12, 2004, was adjourned. The voting was as follows:

Woodson	"aye"	Gaines	"aye"
Pepper	"aye"	Krupicka	"aye"
Euille	"aye"	Macdonald	"aye"
	Smedberg	"aye"	

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APPROVED BY:

WILLIAM D. EUILLE MAYOR

ATTEST:

Jackie M. Henderson, City Clerk